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A
S E R M O N
PREACHED BEFORE THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12th, 1800.

Preached before the Honourable
Jovis, 13^o die Martij, 1800.

RESOLVED, *Nemine contradicente*,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend ARTHUR ONSLOW, Doctor in Divinity, and Dean of *Worcester*, for the Sermon by him preached Yesterday, before this House, at *Saint John's the Evangelist, Westminster*; and that he be desired to print the same: And that Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* and Mr. *John Fane* do acquaint him therewith.



J. LEY,

Cl. D. Dom. Com.

A
S E R M O N
Preached before the HONOURABLE
HOUSE of COMMONS,

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AT THE
CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, WESTMINSTER,
ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1800,
BEING
THE DAY APPOINTED BY HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL
PROCLAMATION,
TO BE OBSERVED AS
A DAY OF SOLEMN FASTING AND HUMILIATION.

BY THE
REVEREND ARTHUR ONSLOW, D.D.
DEAN OF WORCESTER.

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L O N D O N:

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1800.

S E R M O N

HOUSE OF COMMONS

CHRONICLES, Vol. 35

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON THE 14TH DAY OF MAY 1841
BY
THE HON. JOHN RUSSELL
OF
THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN
ESQ.
IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION
PASSED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON THE 11TH DAY OF MAY 1841
RELATIVE TO THE
PROPOSED
AMENDMENT
TO THE
ACT
IN
RELATION
TO
THE
MILITARY
PENSION
LAW



THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
BRITISH MUSEUM
The whole of the
House of Commons
Library is now
open to the public
and the following
list of the names
of the members
of the House of
Commons who
have been
employed in
the
House of
Commons
Library
is
hereby
published

2 CHRONICLES, vi. 34, 35.

IF THY PEOPLE GO OUT TO WAR AGAINST THEIR ENEMIES, BY THE WAY THAT THOU SHALT SEND THEM, AND THEY PRAY UNTO THEE TOWARDS THIS CITY, WHICH THOU HAST CHOSEN, AND THE HOUSE WHICH I HAVE BUILT FOR THY NAME; THEN HEAR THOU FROM THE HEAVENS THEIR PRAYER, AND THEIR SUPPLICATION, AND MAINTAIN THEIR CAUSE.

THESE words are a part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of his temple. They are a solemn address to the Almighty to hear the prayers of His chosen people, whenever they might assemble in that sacred place, to supplicate His protection in distress. The wise king points out also the terms on which the
implored

implored assistance might be expected. He tells his people, first, that they must go out to war against their enemies by the way which God shall send them; that is, agreeably to his will, and according to the rules of justice and self-defence; next, that in that sacred place, dedicated to his service, they must pray to him for assistance; and then, full of hope and piety, he adds, " HEAR THOU FROM THE HEAVENS THEIR
 " PRAYER, AND THEIR SUPPLICATION, AND MAIN-
 " TAIN THEIR CAUSE."

THESE injunctions of a wise king to his people, both on account of their own useful tendency, and the authority they derive from the Holy Records, may be properly considered as lasting and general instructions.

THE Israelites, in whose favour these supplications were to be offered, were indeed under a more peculiar

and visible government of Divine Providence than any other people ; they had inspired prophets to instruct them, and possessed other infallible means of learning the will of Heaven. Whenever they engaged in war, they could ascertain whether the cause were such as God approved. Whatever difficulties occurred, whatever their sufferings might be, they were assured, if they were not disobedient to the laws of God, that He would maintain their cause, and give success to the event. These immediate communications with God, these particular intimations of His will, were confined to the Jewish nation, and that only for a season. But the ways of God are unalterable, and * “ WITH HIM
 “ IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF
 “ TURNING.” The same wisdom and justice which directed the Jewish nation, still continue to govern all the nations of the earth. “ THE KINGDOM IS THE
 “ LORD’S : AND HE IS THE GOVERNOR AMONG THE
 “ NATIONS † ;” and the same sincere piety, the same

upright

* James i. 17.

† Psalm xxii. 28.

upright conduct, which under the immediate dispensation of Heaven, maintained the cause of this chosen people, will, if strictly observed, and stedfastly persisted in on our parts, justify us in entertaining hopes of similar favour and protection.

GOD has never “ * LEFT HIMSELF WITHOUT
 “ WITNESS;”—“† AT SUNDRY TIMES AND IN DIVERS
 “ MANNERS, HE SPAKE IN TIME PAST UNTO THE
 “ FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS, BUT HE HATH IN
 “ THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON,”
 who hath infallibly assured us, that all which appears
 fortuitous, even in the private events of human life,
 much more in the public affairs of kingdoms, are but
 the execution of Divine counsels; since even the un-
 ruly passions of men are directed by God to His own
 ultimate ends, and by means the most unexpected,
 converted to His praise. But although we cannot
 fathom the depths of Heavenly counsels, yet has the
 goodness of the Most High vouchsafed light suf-
 ficient

* Acts xiv. 17.

† Hebrews i. 1, 2.

sufficient to guide our conduct under all the circumstances of human life, and under the forest calamities with which he afflicts a wicked and disobedient people.

THE duty of a people engaged in war, as may be collected from the text, consists in a strict regard to the justice of their cause; and in devout and pious supplications to Heaven, to support and maintain it.

THE motives which induce "NATION TO LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION," ought always to be maturely considered, and weighed in the scales of justice. The protection of a country from hostile attacks; the preservation and security of a kingdom; the support of civil and religious liberties, are reasons for which the sword may be considered as justly unsheathed; after which, the rules of moral and Christian duty, and the laws of civilized countries, must regulate the

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prosecution of the contest. Indeed, the mild spirit of Christianity will, in the most calamitous conflicts, direct the conduct of a nation. Its benign influence has often produced the effect of restraining the fierceness of wrath, and curbing the angry passions of men. If we attend to the facts of history, they will ascertain this point, and we shall find, that the nations of antiquity, amidst all their boasted refinements, conducted war with greater outrage than has been usually witnessed in countries where Christianity has prevailed. That universal spirit of benevolence, which the Divine Author of our salvation has inculcated, whilst it teaches us to shew mercy to the enemy, and compassion to the captive, tends also to confine acts of hostility within proper limits, and prevents them from exceeding the bounds, which are necessary or conducive to the object for which we contend.

WHILST

WHILST the authority of religion effectually imposes these, and every other just restraint, on the origin and progress of war, a nation may, with well-grounded confidence, supplicate the Lord of Hosts to maintain their cause, and give success to their undertakings.

It is almost unnecessary to enter minutely into the causes which compelled us to arm against the enemy. They are well known. It is but too true, that for a long period before the commencement of the contest, our sins and iniquities had provoked the vengeance of the Almighty. His forbearance led us not to repentance, till at length His righteous judgments roused us from a too fatal security. The kingdom was in perfect peace and prosperity; when "A LITTLE CLOUD" in the south foreboded storms, which threatened desolation to the world; a strange and portentous whirlwind burst forth on the continent, turning rapidly every way, and menacing the

overthrow of all regular establishments in its course. It was charged with every dire misfortune, with every impious principle, alike destructive of the private and social happiness of mankind. The first who felt its baneful influence, were those from whom it received its birth. What scenes of cruelty, oppression, and wickedness, did then ensue ! scenes, over which, for the honour of human nature, we would wish for ever to draw a veil. Far and wide did this atrocious mischief extend ; giving cause of alarm to every well-ordered community ; infecting for a time, in a limited degree, and comparatively to a narrow extent, these peaceful and happy shores. In the midst of such formidable appearances, our Government and Legislature, with prudence and foresight, prepared the means of resisting an attack, which was not only directed against our civil and religious establishments, but also against every blessing, of every kind, both temporal and eternal. It is indeed notori-

ous,

rious, that systems of infidelity, false and dangerous principles of government, nurtured in the schools of vain philosophers, were insidiously scattered in every town, I had almost said, in every village of the country: meanwhile the fury of our enemies, having destroyed the existing governments of many nations around them, established their abominable principles by the sword. For a time it was permitted, that their career should be pursued with success, and that the schemes of the ungodly should prosper; but, God be praised, their dominion is again contracted, whilst their pernicious principles are sinking under universal reprobation and contempt. BY THEIR FRUITS HAVE THEY BEEN KNOWN. The evils they inflicted were destructive of that very happiness which they vainly professed to establish. Very few, if any, are now misled by so false a light, for men * "SEEK NOT TO GATHER GRAPES OF THORNS, OR FIGS OF THISTLES." Even the favourers of innovation seem generally to have renounced.

* Matt. vii. 16.

renounced their former opinions, and to unite with the nation at large to support those spiritual and temporal blessings, which we, above every other people, incontestibly enjoy. Indeed throughout the whole course of the conflict in which we have been engaged, the happy state of this country, compared with that of others involved in the same struggle, affords just grounds of assurance, that in the midst of judgment, God has remembered mercy. Dreadful as every species of war must be, and fearful as the events of it are, yet how much more calamitous would our situation have been, if the enemy had been seated on these shores, if this island had been the scene of war. But thanks to the protecting hand of Providence, the case has been far otherwise: We have enjoyed, and still continue to enjoy, internal quiet and security. Our happy constitution is unaltered and intire. We are governed by equal laws, and protected by an equal administration of justice. Liberty,

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in the truest sense of the word; has here taken the deepest root, spread wide its branches, and overshadowed the land; whilst the Poor are supported, both by private charity, and by public provision, in a manner unparalleled in any other country.

For the protection of these, and blessings like to these, we engaged in the present contest; and, we trust, with undisputed justice on our side.

SUBMITTING then, with all humility, to the Supreme Judge of the earth, the justice of our cause, and the conduct we have shewn towards the invaders of our peace; we fly for aid, with humble and devout confidence, to the God of our Fathers, whom he hath already, by his gracious interpositions, so often and so signally delivered.

WE

We glory in the gospel of Christ; we acknowledge
 in Him, the hope of Redemption, and of Atonement
 for the sins of the world. Through His intercession
 and merits, instead of annihilation, (the dark and
 melancholy idea of modern infidels,) we have the
 promise of immortality, and, if we endeavour to do
 the will of God, of admission hereafter into the man-
 sions of eternal bliss. These are the hopes which
 have kindled a becoming zeal within our breasts, to
 resist the desperate opposers of all religion, and all
 order: these were the animating motives which raised
 the nation as one man, to defend the safeguards of all
 our happiness, the *Altar and the Throne*. And blessed
 be God, in whose hands are the issues of all things,
 many great and glorious successes have attended the
 exertions we have made to secure these inestimable
 blessings: but in whatever instances we have expe-
 rienced success, we must acknowledge, that it was
 not

not our own arm, but the power and goodness of the Almighty which gave the victory. On Him we must trust for future protection; since He alone is able to bring to nought the subtle and mischievous designs of our enemies.

If, nevertheless, the neglect of moral and religious duties is general among us, have we not reason to fear that "GOD WILL VISIT FOR THESE THINGS, AND BE AVENGED OF SUCH A NATION AS THIS?"* Are we not become "LOVERS OF PLEASURE MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD?"† Do not iniquities of every kind abound?

Our own knowledge of what is passing in the world, will, I fear, too easily answer these questions; in some instances, if we are faithful to ourselves, even our own hearts will condemn us. These reflections should sink deep into our minds; they should cause us

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* 1 Jer. v. 9.

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.

to ponder on our ways before it be too late, and to direct our feet into the paths of holiness. * "FOR
 " IF YE SEEK GOD, HE WILL BE FOUND OF YOU;
 " BUT IF YE FORSAKE HIM, HE WILL FORSAKE
 " YOU."

Look to the generations of old, and see what destruction has been wrought by the wasteful dominion of sin. If the mighty kingdoms of Assyria, of Babylon, of Egypt, nay even the wide extended empire of Rome, have all mouldered away; if their strength, wealth, and power, could not save them from the destruction which their vices and luxuries had occasioned; if the Jews, because they despised the admonitions of their prophets, and persisted in rejecting the call of their Saviour to repentance, have been driven out from the inheritance of their forefathers, and forced to wander through every nation under heaven; if these things are so, surely they are warn-

ings

ings to us to flee from the wrath to come, to supplicate, nationally, forgiveness for the past, and to implore the assistance of God's holy spirit for our future amendment.

BUT alas! how regardless are we apt to be of future ills! Individuals impose too little restraint on themselves; are too negligent of self controul; too unwilling to perceive the prevalent wickedness of the times, until they are in danger of being overwhelmed by its consequences. Hence, men indulge licentious and wayward passions without a timely check; permit profane thoughts, and worse attendant acts, to become familiar; and, instead of strengthening their minds with sound religion, by a light and inconsiderate conduct, open the way for the admission of every vicious principle.

BUT, this inattention to the serious importance of Religion, in the common habits of life, and the little

concern which by too many is manifested to all its stated duties, will by degrees bring destruction on a whole community. To this lukewarmness in so sacred a concern, and to that irreligion which has too much infected the manners of the present age, we may refer, as to a parent cause, the unheeded diffusion, for some years past, of those pernicious writings, framed to dupe and deceive the multitude, to foster discontent, to allure them from the paths of virtue, and finally, to betray their King, their Country, and their God. Long did this poison lurk unseen, or at least not sufficiently noticed among us. The authors, indeed, of these mischievous doctrines, assumed every shape which could promote their success, or disguise their intentions; corrupting the heart under the appearance of amusing the fancy, and adapting themselves, with a wonderful facility, to the ruling passions and propensities of mankind. To the more inquisitive and self-presuming reasoner, the

subtle venom was conveyed by a chain of reasoning leading to materialism; while, to the voluptuary, it opened unbounded sensuality, an uncontrouled indulgence of the basest appetites,

BUT although the delusion has in some degree disappeared, yet the evils it has produced are a just ground for our future caution. Christianity has still its secret as well as open enemies. The busy advocates for infidelity will never rest, while they have yet a hope, to corrupt the religious opinions, destroy the faith, and ruin the morals of mankind.

NOR are we to be awakened from supineness in our religious concerns, merely from a sense of what is fit and right to be done for the best interests of individuals, thus insidiously assailed, since our existence as a nation is materially concerned in the same cause. What then can we better propose, if we hope for the protection of

of Heaven, than to regard the will of God as our ruling law? His favour can be secured to us on no other terms, and if we forfeit this only refuge, we shall too late repent of our inconsiderateness and folly.

UNFEIGNED repentance for past offences, and pious resolutions of future amendment, must accompany our prayers and petitions. This good work may here take its beginning; but time and unremitting attention must bring it to perfection. This day's solemnity will not alone be sufficient to effect all that is required of us. A piety, that is worthy of that name, must not be transient; a fixed and habitual attention to religious duties, must mark our future conduct. Whilst therefore we are offering up our prayers to God in holy places dedicated to his service; whilst we are using every means in our power to give security to the Country, and permanency to the Constitution, the guard

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of every blessing which we nationally enjoy, let us put on the "WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THE SHIELD OF FAITH, AND THE BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." * Thus defended, we may humbly hope to become partakers of those gracious promises, vouchsafed by God himself to the amended and repenting Israelites.

"IF MY PEOPLE," says the Almighty, "WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY, AND SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN, AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND." †

* Ep. vi.

† 2 Chron. vii. 14.

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of every blessing which we heavenly enjoy, is in part
 of the "WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THE SHIELD OF
 FAITH, AND THE BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHTEOUS-
 NESS."—Thus benighted, we may humbly hope to
 become partakers of those precious promises, vouch-
 sated by God himself to the amended and repenting
 sinners.

"I AM MY FORTRESS," says the Almighty, "WHICH
 ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SHALL SAY, 'THEMSELVES
 AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN
 WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL NOT
 GIVE THEM UP, AND WILL MAKE THEM
 DANDY."

